

To: SACUA

From: Lindsay Admon, Chair, Committee for Fairness, Equity, and Inclusion (CFEI)

Subject: Report on Activities of the Committee for Fairness, Equity, and Inclusion (CFEI) for 2024-2025

Members:

Michael Atzmon
Brandon Bond
Daniel Burns
Amir Eldan
Erika Hathaway
Stefanus Jasin
Kintsugi et. al (Matthew Spradling)
Beth Kuzma
Yongqing Li
Fiona Pratt-MacDonald
Nilton Renno
Maura Seale
Bénédicte Veillet

SACUA Liaison:

Simon Cushing

Meeting Dates:

Tues. 10/1 from 1-2pm
Mon. 11/11 from 9-10am
Tues. 12/3 from 1-2pm
Mon. 1/13 from 9-10am
Tues. 2/4 from 1-2pm
Mon. 3/10 from 9-10am
Tues. 4/1 from 1-2pm

Committee Charge

1. Further establish efforts regarding the President's Tri-Campus Faculty Fellow in Academic Excellence

2. Continue engaging with stakeholders on all UM campuses to further DEI efforts, including by considering how DEI initiatives introduced this year (such as [the Ann Arbor campuses DEI 2.0](#)) are being implemented
3. Meet with leaders of the UM-Dearborn [Office for Holistic Excellence](#), which considers DEI-related issues.
4. Consider emergent issues or topics brought forward by the CFEI committee members for discussion over the course of the year.

Committee Actions, Information Obtained, & Topics Discussed

Meeting topics and themes included seeking updates and determining logistics on the Tri-campus Faculty Fellow in Academic Excellence proposal developed by the CFEI in the previous academic year (2023-2024) (10/01/24 and 11/11/24 meetings). Ultimately, this work was set aside at the suggestion of the Faculty Senate Office as it was felt the next steps for implementation required higher-level discussion with campus leadership.

Our committee discussed the state of DEI at UM, and there were numerous developments related to this over the course of the year. Specifically, we discussed the evolving threats to DEI on campus, the SACUA Chair's 11/20/24 email regarding the threat to funding DEI at UM, concerns raised about public statements made by university leaders, and multiple lay press articles about DEI at UM (12/03/24 meeting). Ultimately, the committee decided to co-author the faculty senate's "Statement in Support of Valued Members of Our Community" (01/13/25 and 02/04/25 meetings).

The committee continued to discuss the rapidly evolving national landscape related to DEI, including federal funding cuts and restrictions and the Provost's announcement that DEI statements would no longer be required in hiring and promotion at UM (03/10/25 and 04/01/25). Of note, with respect to committee charge #3, in which the committee was planning to meet with the Office for Holistic Excellence, the Office is no longer in existence on the UM Dearborn campus.

Recommendations

Continued work next year is needed to better understand:

1. The "elimination" of DEI on campus as touted by former President Ono. How will efforts to foster inclusion, connectivity, and excellence across our campuses be continued?
2. How will the discourse around DEI at UM influence our Presidential search? Or ongoing Dean's searches?
3. How to implement the Tri-campus Faculty Fellow in Academic Excellence program.
4. How to develop opportunities for the success of students, faculty and staff of the three campuses.

Statement in Support of Valued Members of Our Community

We write in the face of the recent barrage of executive orders targeting 2SLGBTQIA+ people, particularly trans and gender-expansive people, people with disabilities, immigrants, refugees, and undocumented people, and individuals and communities represented by and working on DEI initiatives, including Black, Indigenous, Latine, Arab/MENA, Asian, and other people of color, religious minority groups, and women.

We write in the face of myriad falsehoods and disinformation campaigns. The truth is that the overwhelming majority of immigrants, like native borns, are law-abiding, hardworking, community-minded, and benefit our country. The crime rates among undocumented immigrants are [less than half as high](#) as among U.S.-born citizens. The truth is that queer, transgender, and gender-expansive individuals have the same rights to their identities as any other groups. Racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination have not been eradicated and so we need DEI initiatives to help eliminate the barriers impeding opportunity for people of all genders, races, ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations, disabilities, and classes.

We write in the face of pressures that would silence these words, hinder our ability to recognize our colleagues, and censor our appreciation of our friends. We must speak plainly and openly, without evasion or pretense. Each and every member of our university community brings valued perspectives, skills, experiences, understandings, and strengths to our university. And yet, we are aware that many are experiencing a political and governmental onslaught—one that would deny them their pursuit of happiness, closet their experiences, and separate them from us, quarantined within invisible zones of erasure. All of these tactics serve to dehumanize these individuals and the communities of which they are a part.

To our many friends and colleagues in the staff, student, and faculty bodies who now find yourselves under renewed attack, we emphatically state here and now that you matter. Your value to our community is unquestioned and unshakable. You belong here, just as much as *any* of us belong here, and we unflinchingly proclaim the continued importance of including your perspectives in our diverse community. You are welcome here, regardless of politics, as cherished members of our university family.

To our university leaders, we call on you to resist current and planned federal actions that attempt to undo decades of anti-discrimination policy and civil rights laws meant to address systemic discrimination. The higher education community must not give in to these attacks or preemptively yield to them. [Obeying in advance](#) to authoritarian mandates is not a successful strategy. Instead, we should [actively and vocally resist](#). The federal government has threatened to take funding hostage to politicize and redefine our community's humanity—but principles can only be revealed when challenged. Now is not the time to surrender our values, because otherwise those values never *truly* existed. We urge our university leaders to remember that the University of Michigan was a leader

on issues of diversity and inclusion as evidenced by former University President Bollinger taking the fight to defend affirmative action all the way to the Supreme Court.

To our university leaders, we call on you to be unapologetic in defense of the autonomy of higher education and the value of public education. To do otherwise would compromise UM's efforts to realize its mission of "creating, communicating, preserving and applying knowledge, art, and academic values, and in developing leaders and citizens who will challenge the present and enrich the future." Our commitment to the mission of higher education should not retreat under threat. We must not sacrifice our values or members of our community for federal funding.

Most importantly of all, we call on our university leaders to repeat with us, in the face of the barrage, that our vulnerable friends, colleagues, and peers matter and to commit to the following supports:

- Recognize the value that these important groups—2SLGBTQIA+ people, particularly trans and gender-expansive people, people with disabilities, immigrants, refugees, and undocumented people, and individuals and communities represented by and working on DEI initiatives, including Black, Indigenous, Latine, Arab/MENA, Asian, and other people of color, religious minority groups, and women—contribute to our campus and actively counter negative narratives stigmatizing and denigrating these peoples;
- Commit to, reaffirm, and defend the core values of the University of Michigan that include integrity, respect, inclusion, equity, diversity, and innovation;
- Confirm what support the Institution will give to students, staff, and faculty if they are taken by ICE from our workplace;
- Provide emergency funding to mitigate loss of federal funding, and transition staff positions funded by federal grant money to a permanent university funding source;
- Develop criteria for advancement and promotion that are not based on externally funded research and supports public scholarship and other non-academic forms for the dissemination of knowledge, and provide optional extensions to the tenure clock for faculty who encounter cuts to federal funding or disruptions because of executive orders;
- Protect faculty, whether tenured or not, by honoring the [1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#), formulated by the American Association of Colleges and Universities and the American Association of University Professors; and

- Ensure that the University of Michigan Press remains committed to publishing research manuscripts by faculty who are positioned within targeted communities. The publishing of these materials is crucial for tenure.

Sincerely,

The Committee on Anti-Racism (CAR)

The Committee on the Economic and Social Well-Being of the Faculty (CESWF)

The Committee on Fairness, Equity, and Inclusion (CFEI)

The Committee on the Oversight of Administrative Action (COAA)

Faculty Representatives from the Queer and Trans Task Force

Endorsed by the Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs (SACUA) on
February 10, 2025